

## ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES.

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LET me speak to you to-day not merely as librarians, but as educators; as members of a great and growing though somewhat formless body devoted to both the conservation and the advancement of learning; as members whose duties, while perhaps mainly administrative in character, are not without a tutorial side. Perhaps it would be better to say educationists, rather than educators, if thereby the meaning is made more clear. My object in thus hailing you is to indicate our viewpoint and enable us to enter upon the theme in its broader aspects and with widest sympathy.

I believe that no one who has given the subject unprejudiced consideration will deny that long strides have been taken in educational theory and practice within the last few decades. As a result of these movements demand is made upon us in the name of reason that within the memory of men yet young was undreamt of. You who sit before me are in part responsible for this demand because you and your predecessors have helped to create it. Therefore it is incumbent upon you that you shall help to meet such rational demand and satisfy its cravings. These cravings can be satisfied so far as university libraries are concerned only by certain necessary changes in organization, administration, and scope imperatively called for by the new education.

If in the course of my argument some of the things said seem harsh, I beg that you will understand that there is neither harshness nor animosity in them by any intent of mine. I am not now, and have not been for some six or seven years past, engaged in university library work. For twice as many years, however, it has been a favorite study with me and the sense of detachment arising from occupation in another kind of library work — a sense amounting almost to aloofness — enables me

to examine the field with a clarity of vision that otherwise might be lacking. This sense of detachment may have betrayed me into a greater freedom of speech than is permissible under the circumstances — but I hope this is not the fact.

We all admit, with what of cheer we may, that there are many things we do not know and therefore cannot make positive statements about, but in the same breath we may assert that there are some things we do know and are entitled to speak of with conviction. It is with this attitude that I have made positive statements concerning certain phases of the organization and administration of university libraries. If the form in which I have couched my message seems dogmatic, let me explain it at once by saying that the positive form of statement was chosen deliberately after having made an examination of the records as printed of the College Section of the American Library Association. This choice was not made through a wish either to be or to seem dogmatic, but because in that retrospective look my eye was impressed — not to say oppressed — by the vagueness and formlessness of a sea of woulds and shoulds that stretched away into the dim distance. I therefore chose the positive rather than the conditional form of statement as a medium for the expression of the ideas and opinions which I place before you and for which I ask your open-minded consideration, not merely as librarians, but as earnest students of educational matters.

Tearing down is much easier than building up, we are often told. I have therefore sought not to destroy, but to transform; and I trust that for every statement which you may regard as iconoclastic, in what follows, you may at least find another which may be regarded as having a constructive character.

Let it be stated at the outset that this dis-

cussion is confined strictly to the phenomena of the American university, or, more exactly, that it does not include a consideration of any set of university conditions other than those actually existent or nascent in the United States of America. This device lessens the scope of the subject, but even thus abridged it is so extensive that nothing more than a sketch can be presented within the necessary limits.

It is not necessary for me to present a definition of that indefinite but surely growing thing, the American university, — and I shall not do so. Others have already done that very well indeed, and a deal of nonsense has been uttered about it beside. But for the present purpose the word “university” is used to mean an institution of the higher learning maintained for the furtherance of education and research. It is not intended to enter into a discussion of even this definition. It is merely a definition, a finger-board, pointing out the direction the argument is to take.

Universities consist essentially of two organized bodies with their auxiliary equipments. These two bodies may be called, for want of better names, the Board of Trust and the Faculties. This discussion has to do with both of these bodies, because its specific subject forms an essential part of each of them, and because the relations of the library with the Board of Trust ought not to be less firm and close than with the Faculties, although the ramifications will be wider and more intricate with the Faculties. I shall try to illustrate this idea later, and ask to have it borne in mind with particularity.

The argument does not require that the organization of the Board of Trust be entered into at this time, but with the Faculties the case is different.

Because the Faculties have the work of instruction and of research in immediate charge, they are often thought of and spoken of as the university. At this point it would be convenient to use the term in that narrower sense, but for the sake of clearness let it be avoided even at the cost of circumlocution.

That body with its natural auxiliaries, then,

that body called the Faculties and having in immediate charge the work of instruction and research, consists of numerous parts the names of which are yet more numerous and confusing, namely: the college, the school, the library, the laboratory, the museum, the gymnasium, the shop, etc. But all these, when considered with regard to their essential functions, group into classes of departments few in number. These are the school, the library, and, possibly, the museum. If you ask what has become of the others I answer that they are each and every one either merely one of these last or else a part of one of them. If you find it impossible to assent to this view there is greater trouble to follow, because the position which I prefer to take is that they reduce to two, instead of three, and that these two are the school and the library.

It is not held that these are the best names for the departments under consideration, nor even that they are good names. Indeed, I fear that the last is no longer a good name for its department — and will tell you why without much delay.

I have spoken of the Faculties, considered as a body, and their auxiliary equipments. Now a school or college is one of these auxiliary equipments of the Faculties considered as a body. In turn a laboratory is one of the equipments of a school. And, in like manner, we may go on through the list until my position is justified, and no difficulty arises until the library and the museum are reached. The museum is often regarded as a laboratory, but there is a difference which may be made clear perhaps by considering the dissimilarity of their contents. The materials of education and research, which may be considered as a part of the auxiliary equipment of the Faculties, falls roughly into two classes according as it may or may not be used repeatedly. The first of these let us call the “permanent material of education” and the second “supplies.” Most of the material of a museum falls into the first class, while most of that of the laboratory falls into the second class.

The Faculties, in the course of their develop-

ment, need and have accumulated vast stores of the permanent material of education. This consists of books, maps, charts, manuscripts, photographs, lantern slides, drawings, statuary, paintings, and specimens of sorts innumerable, representing all the kingdoms of this world. The whole of this falls into the one category which I have called the "permanent material of education and research."

Economic administration calls for classification. Classification is putting like things together. It is not a long step to find that the museum logically goes *to* (not *with*) the library rather than *with* the laboratory. The two things, namely, library and museum, cover the same field more or less exactly. The difference is more one of form of content than of the content itself. The museum contains the text and the library its commentary. If the museum is to go *with* instead of *to* the library, then it must be erected into another department co-extensive with the university. But this would not be economic administration. The museum should go to the library and not the library to the museum, because organization in libraries is so much further advanced than in museums that the needs of both will be best served by this arrangement. But then the library must be no longer a mere "bookery," as its present name suggests, and classification is something else than what is commonly called by that name in libraries nowadays.

This, then, is the ideal to be sought. Coalesce the library and the museum. Bind them together in the closest possible relation. Let them be no longer a library and a museum, but an entity, a living organism whose two parts are as vital to each other as are flesh to bone and bone to flesh. But do not mix them. A mixture is not an organism. Bone and flesh do not mix while vitality remains — nor do they separate while vitality remains.

This brings us to the consideration of university library organization and the more immediate subject under discussion.

In the foregoing introduction, without having said it in words, the university, considered

in relation to its ultimate work, has been held to have two aspects voiced respectively by the two bodies comprising it. These two aspects are the External or general governmental voiced by the Board of Trust, and the Internal or immediate administrative voiced by the Faculties.

For convenience, in the consideration of the university library which is to follow, I shall choose to regard it also in these dual aspects because I shall hold what I have before implied, namely, that it is clearly co-extensive with the university not merely in the narrower sense defined by the Faculties, but in its broadest sense. It touches closely every interest of the university in its minutest ramifications — otherwise it is not the kind of library now under consideration.

Before going further I would like to have understood clearly the force of the term "co-extensive" as just applied to the university library. Of course I do not mean that it is the university, nor that it does, or can do, the work of the university, nor that it is greater than the university, nor that it is equal to the university. But I do mean that it is an integral part of the university, without which the university cannot exist; that it is as long and as broad though not as deep as the university, and that the university contains no other department save itself which has these attributes.

Then *the government of the university library reproduces in miniature the main features of the government of the university itself.* This statement may be taken as a basic principle. Upon it is built the structure I submit.

The library has an external and an internal administration and each of these has a breadth corresponding to its proper functions.

The external administration falls naturally into three groups. These groups form

- I. The directorate.
- II. Faculty representation.
- III. Representation of the Board of Trust.

The first of these, the directorate, is the external governing board having actual charge of the library and its policies. It properly con-



sists of three, and three only. These three are

- (a.) President of the university.
- (b.) President of the Board of Trust.
- (c.) Head of the library.

This statement is intended to mirror the normal state of things and must vary slightly with variations in the government of the university. To make my meaning more clear it may be said that in outlining the typical university I took no note of such a body, for instance, as the Board of Overseers of Harvard University, because it is not essential to the conception of the type. In the same way when I state that the external governing board of the university library consists of the foregoing three officers, I have not assumed that the President of the university and the President of the Board of Trust are one and the same person. Such a case, of course, requires a solution, which, however, is easily found in the election by the Board of Trust of a representative from among its members. The essential points are, first, that the external directorate of the university library shall exist; second, that it be constructed substantially as indicated; and third, that its purposes will be best conserved if it consists of three persons and these the three named.

A conspicuous lack of the element supplied by this form of directorate is the prime cause of much of the inefficiency generally chargeable to the university libraries of this country. And if it is not known to you it ought to be that there is no other one class of large libraries in the land that as a class is so generally and so hopelessly behind the times as are the university and college libraries. One of the gravest faults in the organization of university libraries is usually found here. It is common to see the functions of the directorate usurped by a committee from the Faculties. So serious and so far-reaching is the effect of this error that I am led to urge upon you a statement so pungent that it may awaken resentment. Nevertheless I am convinced that to commit the policies of the university library to a committee elected from and by the Faculties, or ap-

pointed from the Faculties, is to start the library if not on the downward path then on the path to comparative mediocrity. It is essentially, radically, wrong and cannot be righted except by undoing.

I cannot here enter into a detailed statement of reasons for the position taken, but because this is a point of deep interest to all concerned and peculiarly apt at causing heartburnings, I must ask you to permit its discussion at a length which may, to those not concerned, seem disproportionate.

It is conceivable that the Faculties, or more likely the professors, may consider themselves aggrieved or even attacked by the assumption of such a position, but that attitude is not tenable, as it is only the system, if system it may be called, that is attacked. The position does not argue the moral obliquity of the professor nor of the Faculties, but it does point with significant finger to the fact that the individual personal interests of the professor as head of his immediate department clash with those of the library as a whole, and tend to make him not an impartial judge or counsellor.

There seems to be some peculiar element in ordinary professorial duties that militates against the administrative faculty and that too frequently blunts it or that even totally destroys it. Now, the head of the university library must be first of all an administrator — this without prejudice to either his breadth or depth of scholarship — and it is not more than fair to him that he should have associated with him in the management of his department others who are also administrators.

The accuracy of the statement about the administrative faculty among professors is easily enough verified in our universities and it is not uttered in derogation of a noble body of men. I recall an incident that occurred many years since which will perhaps be illustrative. A student was one day busy in the book-stack of the university library when his attention was attracted by the curious actions of a professor of the highest standing who was also busy in an adjoining aisle between the stacks. The professor was upon his knees in the aisle.

The light fell gently upon the silvery hair crowning his uncovered head. In his hand he held a volume and with upturned eyes he seemed anxiously searching for the proper place in which to put the book which he was returning to the shelf after having examined it. He carefully put the volume into an opening which seemed about the right size, but it did not quite fit. So he timidly withdrew the book and continued his search on the adjacent shelves until he found a hole that the volume seemed to fit more exactly — and there he left it. For thirty-five long years he had trod these halls, had studied and had taught, but had not yet learned the use of a shelf-mark of a simple description. You need not smile — far less laugh. He was a kindly and a cultured gentleman; a refined and scholarly man; and if I should speak his name to you every head would bow in assent. For all these years with ever-growing respect his voice had been heard touching all that classic memory holds dear; his pen had made his name revered in language and in art; and when his artistic soul bade his nimble fingers make the music that he loved so well the ears of those who heard him were delighted and their hearts were touched. And when at last the word was passed that he was dead more than one man who never had the great privilege of sitting under his instruction, but to whom his life had been, and yet is, an inspiration went in heaviness to look upon his dead face and pay high tribute.

With one other brief illustration of a different class I will pass on. It would seem a reasonable thing to expect that a university library, whose range is the whole field of literature, would arrange the apportionment of its funds for the purchase of literature in accordance with the relative productivity of the different fields of literature. But I am not aware of any instance in which this is done when the apportionment is controlled by a Faculty committee. The professorial chair is the unit instead. I am aware that there are makeshifts provided to get around the difficulty — but they are makeshifts; that is the trouble. It is

not a makeshift administration that we are seeking.

All this does not mean, however, that there should be no library committee of the Faculties. That would be perhaps quite as great a mistake as the other.

The second of the three groups named above is that formed by the library committee of the Faculties; and it should be elected from and by the Faculties, except that the active heads of such museums — or of such departments of the university as have museums organically related with the library — might be ex-officio members of the committee. Its duties are purely advisory and the number of members is not a vital matter; but the practical necessity for an active working committee of this kind is neither to be overlooked nor minified.

The third of the three groups is the library-committee of the Board of Trust. It is created by and from within the Board and its duties are to provide adequate funds for the work and to audit, or direct the auditing, of their expenditure. This closes my sketch of the external aspect of the library.

Now is reached that point in my discussion where the subject opens out with fan-like sweep into infinite detail. As I touch upon internal administration, however, let it be remembered that I am speaking to past masters in the craft and it shall be my aim to avoid detail.

The university library has four chief functions. These are to collect, to prepare, to conserve, and to distribute the permanent material of education and research. To these four chief functions which have been long recognized others may be added that will not be conceded to be of first importance. But there is one which I would like to see added to rank with these and that is the creation or production of the permanent material of education and research. Then let us say the university library has five chief functions. These are to collect, to prepare, to conserve, to create, and to distribute the permanent material of education and research. You will be quick to see that the term "to distribute"

has taken on a new value. Whereas under the old statement it meant little more than to circulate books, under the new statement it means also to publish them. In other words, the university press becomes a part of the library.

Of course this recital of functions is more or less immediately suggestive of the lines into which the staff organization must fall. Aside from the general direction of the whole internal working of the library, each of these five functions calls for at least one division chief; and some of them may be so divided or inter-related as to call for more than one. For example, "to collect" calls for a chief of purchase division, but under this same head must be provided also for receipts. With receipts, however, shipments may well be allied and this belongs not under the function "to collect," but instead under that labelled "to distribute." Considerations of this kind are too numerous and too diverse to permit of any attempt here to more than indicate them by some such instance as that given, but when they have all been considered it is found that the whole work may be conveniently grouped under one head with about eight assistants of rank. The organization then takes this form:

- (a) Head of the Department.
- (b) Secretary of the Department (who may or may not be Vice Head).
- (c) Chief of Purchase Division.
- (d) Chief of Receipts and Shipments Division.
- (e) Chief of Catalogue Division.
- (f) Chief of Inspection Division.
- (g) Chief of Reference Division.
- (h) Chief of Circulation Division.
- (i) Chief of Publication Division.

This group of division chiefs forms the natural advisory body for the Head of the Department so far as the purely internal workings of the library are concerned. It is his cabinet, so to speak. Permit me to suggest that it is logically the natural and proper body to apportion the book fund.

Beyond this it is not my purpose to go. Of course it is seen at a glance that at least some

of these divisions call for subdivision and that all call for a number of assistants of lower grade. For instance, classification is taken care of under (e), Catalogue Division, although it might well be erected into a separate division with its own chief, particularly if the museum becomes a part of the library and classification is thereby raised in the way indicated at an earlier point in this discussion. In like manner binding and repairing are here included under (f), Inspection Division, and supplies under (c), Purchase Division, but these are matters of detail and are not particularly difficult of treatment if the object is the administration of a library merely as a "bookery."

But I wish to speak to you for a moment on a wider and a deeper topic — the coalescence of the library and the museum; the union of the commentary with its text. Let me first enter vigorous protest against a false conception of the scope and relations of museums, libraries, and laboratories, a conception which seems to have been gaining ground with university presidents and with professors in the departments of learning commonly called scientific. The term "museum" has been so often applied to unworthy collections that it has fallen into some disrepute with scientific workers and the term "laboratory" has been magnified by them to fill not only its own right and proper place, but also that of the older and better name for the institution. There has been much loose talk to the effect that the library is a laboratory. The truth is that it is nothing of the sort; and statements to such effect are based upon a misconception. It is true that certain laboratory and museum methods may be used in the library to great advantage and should be used there; but the truth stops at that point. In brief, the laboratory is to the museum what the departmental library is to the university library. I have elsewhere entered more fully into the proper functions of the museum and will not here take your time for a more elaborate statement.

We know that the museum in this country is now chiefly a show-place, at its best, when



in truth it ought to be the touch-stone of vital growth. The difference in development between the library and the museum has been pointed out with friendly hand by Dr. A. B. Meyer,<sup>1</sup> of Dresden, in his recent monograph "On the Museums of the Eastern Part of the United States of America." Three statements in his preface to Part I. struck me with particular force in this connection. These are to the effect that in the United States libraries and museums are not always sharply divided; that, aside from this, libraries are on a higher plane of development than are museums; and that, in general, the museum in its essentials there stands upon a higher level than the European. In his phrase "aside from this" it seems to be implied that the library and museum should be kept sharply separated. I cannot assent to this general proposition, however. The vitality desired for the museum can be had only by its union with the library so that the book and the specimen illustrate

each other, so that text and commentary are side by side, not merely for the earnest student, but even for the casual inquirer. In thus vitalizing the museum the library need lose none of its vigor. Nor will it if only the problem is grasped intelligently and with strength. The beginning of the work is neither difficult nor complicated and beginnings have been made already sufficient to demonstrate the worth of the plan. A carefully arranged set of references between the two things, the book and the specimen, paves the way and is of untold value; but before the whole work can be done there is one huge unsolved problem that must be faced and that is classification — not merely of books, but of things. I will not quarrel with you over classification. I am not looking for a perfect scheme of classification. The thing to be sought is a rational plan whereby the various classifications now in use in different sciences may be unified or brought into a working relation with each other and with book classification. Here is a fruitful field. Who will enter it?

<sup>1</sup> Ueber Museen des Ostens der Vereinigten Staaten von Nord Amerika. Reisestudien von A. B. Meyer, Director des Königl. Zoologischen und Anthropologisch-Ethnographischen Museums zu Dresden.









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